



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Alaska National Parks News Release

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Final National Park Compendiums Released for 2013

The National Park Service has released the Alaska park compendiums for 2013. These are compilations of all designations, closures and restrictions imposed under the discretionary authority within the regulations covering national park areas.

Beginning with public meetings in December and a public comment period in January and February, the draft compendiums received more than 59,000 comments. Most of those were letters supporting changes to proposed restrictions to sport hunting regulations in several national preserves; letters opposing the proposed action were also received.

Most sport hunting practices and seasons in national preserves continue to be regulated by the State of Alaska. The restrictions adopted by the National Park Service in these compendiums are in response to recent state regulations which liberalize the taking of wolves, coyotes, and bears in some game management units, including certain national preserves. The NPS changes are a result of differing legal and policy frameworks between the National Park Service and the State of Alaska.

The NPS now prohibits the take of wolves and coyotes between May 1 and August 9 in the following national preserves: Denali, Gates of the Arctic, Katmai, Aniakchak, Alagnak Wild River, Lake Clark, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Yukon-Charley Rivers. The seasons remain open from August 10 to April 30. In some or all areas within these preserves, the State of Alaska had allowed wolves and coyotes (including pups) to be taken in late spring and summer when the animals are denning and raising vulnerable offspring. The brief shortening of the wolf and coyote season will protect animals at the den and during the period when their pelts have little economic or trophy value. It will also protect a subsistence opportunity for taking that wolf or coyote later in the year when their coats are in prime condition and can be sold. The shorter season is also generally consistent with federal subsistence regulations.

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The compendiums for Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias and Yukon-Charley Rivers include a prohibition on the taking of brown bears at a bait station. Bait stations typically consist of human food sources such as breads and grease, or dog food set in a location that will attract the desired animal where it can then be taken. The public safety concerns posed by food-conditioned bears are widely recognized. These bears are more likely to be a danger to humans, and it is incongruent with best management practices and public educational messaging found in national park areas on the issue of food and bears.

The NPS has also renewed a prohibition on using artificial light to take black bears at dens and taking black bear sows with cubs at dens in Denali and Gates of the Arctic National Preserves.

Consistent with sound management principles and conservation of wildlife, practices which disturb animals when they are in a vulnerable state – in dens, when reproducing, or very young – are usually avoided. Accordingly, these practices have generally been prohibited under federal subsistence and state harvest regulations. Additionally, management practices that seek to increase harvest of predators in order to boost populations of prey species are not consistent with the management of National Park Service areas which are to retain naturally dynamic wildlife populations.

The 2013 compendium for Wrangell-St. Elias also closed an old trail for motorized, recreational use. The trail is located off the Nabesna Road. In 2012 this multiple use trail was rebuilt in a nearby location that is drier and more sustainable.

Public involvement in the compendium process began in early December 2012 when the National Park Service held the first of seven public hearings in park communities to hear input as these restrictions were being drafted.

The 2013 compendiums are available at:

http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/current_compendiums.cfm

A written copy may be requested directly from any park or the National Park Service, 240 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501, Attn: Compendium.